

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 and 6-17 are pending; Claims 1 and 6-8 are amended; Claims 4 and 5 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; Claims 9-17 are withdrawn; and no claims are newly added herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Abstract was objected to; Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and Claims 1-4 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Tabata (U.S. Pat. No. 5,995,219) in view of Amai et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,502,311).

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 5-7 contain allowable subject matter. The subject matter of allowable Claim 5 has been incorporated into independent Claim 1.

With regard to the outstanding objection to the Abstract, the noted informalities have been addressed by the present amendment. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

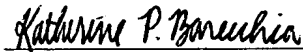
With respect to the rejection of Claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the noted informalities have been addressed by this amendment. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection of Claims 1-8 be withdrawn.

Because independent Claim 1, from which Claims 2-4 and 8 depend has been amended to include the subject matter of Claim 5, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-3 and 8 are now in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion and present amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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